

## MA Philosophy of Health and Happiness

This programme focuses on the growing field of happiness and its overlap with health and wellbeing asking questions such as: What is happiness? What is health? How does illness affect our understanding of what matters? Do our views about death and mortality affect how happy we are and how meaningful our lives are?

You will explore issues at the intersection of philosophy, ethics, psychology and medicine, which have important implications for policy and health care. This programme is aimed at graduates who have a background in philosophy, psychology, theology, health sciences, medicine or social sciences. It also carries CPD credits for members of the Royal College of Physicians.

We also offer this programme by distance learning - for more information, see [Philosophy of Health and Happiness MA \(Distance Learning\) \(/postgraduate/courses/distance/philosophy/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx).

**Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)**

### Course fact file

**Type of Course:** Taught

**Study Options:** Full time, part time

**Duration:** 1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

**Start date:** September

### Related courses

[Philosophy of Health and Happiness module \(/postgraduate/courses/cpd/phil/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/cpd/phil/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx)

[MA Philosophy of Health and Happiness \(Distance learning\) \(/postgraduate/courses/distance/philosophy/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/distance/philosophy/philosophy-health-happiness.aspx)

[MA Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/phil-mind-cognitive-sci.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/phil-mind-cognitive-sci.aspx)

[MA Philosophy \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/philosophy.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/phil/philosophy.aspx)

### Contact

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[School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion \(/schools/ptr/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/index.aspx)

[Department of Philosophy \(/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/index.aspx)

### Details

You will study six modules in total, three of which are core Philosophy modules:

- Research Skills and Methods
- Philosophy of Health and Happiness
- God, Freedom and the Meaning of Life or Philosophy and Mental Health

Your remaining three modules are optional, and can be chosen from within School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, the School of Psychology, or the Birmingham Law School. Modules available within Philosophy include:

- Bioethics
- Global Ethics
- The Value of Life
- Human Rights
- Philosophy of Cognitive Science
- Research Seminar

You will also complete a 15,000-word dissertation.

### Modules

You will study three core modules as follows:

#### Both of -

#### Research Skills and Methods

This module is an introduction to the methods of contemporary philosophy. It identifies key philosophical reasoning tools and styles of argument, providing opportunity to apply these to classical philosophical debates. It also highlights the great variety of philosophical theorising on offer by contrasting so-called 'armchair' and empirically-informed philosophy, as well as theoretical and applied philosophy. Throughout there will be an emphasis on honing essential practical skills, namely reading and writing philosophy at postgraduate level. This module will also be useful as a basic refresher course for those who have studied some philosophy already. The sessions are

## Philosophy of Health and Happiness

The module will examine debates at the forefront of current research in the philosophy of health and happiness. You will explore conceptual problems (e.g. what 'health' and 'disease' are) and question contemporary lifestyle issues (for instance, regarding how health, happiness and meaning relate, as well as whether there is a correlation between income and life satisfaction). You will also be asked to consider how technological advances (such as those in genetics) are changing these understandings.

From 2013/14 onwards, this module will be **accredited for CPD** (<http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/cpd>) by the Royal College of Physicians (equivalent to 10 category 1 credits).

**Plus one of:**

## God, Freedom and the Meaning of Life

The module provides an introduction to a number of philosophical issues that have a relevance to the philosophy of religion, such as: Are there sound arguments for/against the existence of God? Is freedom compatible with God's foreknowledge? Why is there something rather than nothing? Is life meaningless without God? Can there be morality without God?

## Philosophy and Mental Health

This module provides an overview of contemporary debates in philosophy and mental health. In each seminar a new issue will be investigated, but there will be three interrelated threads throughout the module. The first is about the nature of psychiatry. The second is about the sense in which psychiatric disorders are disorders of the self. The third is about how we should respond to people with psychiatric disorders, considered from a wide range of perspectives, including interpersonal, clinical, ethical, legal and public health policy. These themes will be addressed by reference to different aspects of psychiatry (e.g. classification, diagnosis, aetiology, research, treatment), different psychiatric disorders (e.g. addiction, anorexia, dementia, dissociation, schizophrenia, personality disorders, psychopathy), and different disciplinary frameworks.

You will also choose three optional modules from a range which includes:

## Bioethics

This module introduces you to the increasing number of dilemmas in bioethics that cross national boundaries and transcend domestic regulation. Bioethical dilemmas, whether arising from scientific and technological developments or from the research practices of pharmaceutical companies, raise issues which cannot be effectively addressed at national or regional levels. Bioethics clearly calls for global solutions to what are global dilemmas and you will be introduced to some of the key bioethical issues which arise in the contemporary global context.

## Global Ethics

This module aims to introduce you to key concepts and debates in global ethics. First, we will explore several prominent traditions in ethical theory; next we will apply these normative ethical theories to concrete ethical questions. In investigating these theories and applications, you will be encouraged to question your presumptions about the nature of ethics and moral values. The module also develops critical reasoning and argumentative skills through philosophical discussion and writing. The theoretical tools of analysis and argument can be applied in all aspects of global ethics.

## Value of Life

This module is intended to provide scope for an assessment of that brand of extreme philosophical pessimism according to which life not only has no positive value but is something we should be better off without – that, to echo the title of a recent book by David Benatar, it is "better never to have been". The initial focus will be on the arguments for this view put forward recently by Benatar himself and before him by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). The focus will then shift to the more affirmative approaches of thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and William James (1842-1910). An important subsidiary theme will be the nature of pleasure, pain, happiness and suffering.

## Human Rights

This module covers a selection of human rights issues from a legal, political and philosophical perspective. Recent developments and topic issues, including civil rights threats after September 11, are discussed, so is the protection of minorities, capital punishment, and the development of gender-based human rights.

## Philosophy of Cognitive Science

This module covers a range of advanced topics in empirically-informed philosophy of mind. In any given year, some of the following topics will be addressed in detail: theories of intentionality; differences between human and animal cognition; pathologies of belief such as delusions and self-deception; theories of emotion; accounts of cognitive rationality; the relationship between ownership and authorship of thoughts; the narrative view of the self; the psychology of wisdom and expertise.

## Research Seminar

This is an innovative module which replicates the experience of being a professional academic. You will attend the PhilSoc and choose a topic from those discussed at the seminar. You will then write your own paper on that topic, which is assessed by members of staff as if it was going through the 'peer-review' process for acceptance to an academic journal. You will then present your paper in the Postgraduate Seminar and rewrite it according to the comments. This module provides a unique and invaluable experience for students considering continuing in academia.

## Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home / EU: £6,210 full-time; £3,105 part-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

For part-time students, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about **fees for international students** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx>).

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments. Learn more about **postgraduate tuition fees and funding** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx>).

## Alumni Bursary

The University of Birmingham is offering awards of ?2,000 to outstanding alumni wishing to undertake Masters study at the University during 2015. There are 50 awards available and applications for the bursary must be submitted by 17:00 on 31 March 2015. Full details and how to apply can be found on the **Distinguished Alumni Scholarship page** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/Distinguished-Alumni-Scholarship-scheme.aspx>).

## Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

## Entry requirements

The programme allows for multi-disciplinary entry. You need an upper second-class Honours degree, or equivalent, in Philosophy or other relevant subjects (Theology, Politics, Psychology, English, etc.) or a Joint Honours degree of which Philosophy or another relevant subject is a component.

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

## International students

### Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

### English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)

## How to apply

### Before you make your application

You may wish to [register your interest with us \(https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate\)](https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

### Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL099.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL099.htm)

## Related links

[Postgraduate funding - Department of Philosophy \(/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/postgraduate/funding.aspx\)](/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/postgraduate/funding.aspx)

## Learning and teaching

You will be taught by a vibrant community of philosophers, pursuing original research on a wide range of topics on which expert supervision is available, including: ethics, metaethics and global ethics; philosophy of mind and cognitive science; philosophy of medicine; the philosophy of health and happiness; and the philosophy of religion.

You will participate in a weekly Postgraduate Seminar and in the regular meetings of PhilSoc and the Staff Seminar.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

## Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the [Academic Writing Advisory Service \(AWAS\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the [English for International Students Unit \(EISU\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx).

## Related staff

[Dr Jussi Suikkanen \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/suikkanen-jussi.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/suikkanen-jussi.aspx)

[Dr Iain Law \(/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/philosophy/law-ian.aspx)

## Employability

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Birmingham's Philosophy postgraduates develop a range of skills that are highly desirable in the job market, including: articulacy; precise analytical thought; clarity; rigour in formulating complex problems; and the ability to analyse and construct sound arguments.

Over the past five years, over 93% of Philosophy postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Due to the transferable nature of their skills, Philosophy postgraduates traditionally enter a wide range of employment areas, from the Civil Service to finance. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Afrikids (child rights organisation); Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust; Muslim Scout Fellowship; Rights and Humanity; University of Birmingham; and University of Edinburgh.

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